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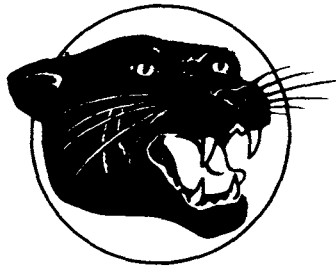
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Panther Sports News

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May 1, 1985

LS-Hts 31

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL (May 1, 1985)--Riverton, Ill. native LeAnn Thomas has signed a national letter of intent to play volleyball at Eastern Illinois University next fall.

The 5-foot-4 setter led Riverton High School to a 35-2 record and the team's fourth consecutive bid to the Elite 8 of the Illinois State High School tournament. The Hawks won the coveted state title in 1983 with Thomas as one of their stalwart performers.

"I've never coached anyone who spends the amount of time LeAnn does perfecting her skills," states her prep coach Charlene Lehnen. "LeAnn is aggressive and has good quickness on the court. She even thinks quick out on the court and that is important. LeAnn wants to be an expert at the game and is determined to be the very best player she can be."

Eastern Illinois head coach Betty Ralston echoes Lehnen's comments. "LeAnn works extremely hard on the court to improve. She is very versatile because she can set for us but also come in and play the back row. Another thing that struck me about LeAnn was her winning attitude and tradition. She has always been associated with a winner."

Indeed she has. Thomas' record since the 6th grade in the highly successful Riverton program is a staggering 230-7 (.970). The four-year letterman has been a member of four consecutive Sangamon Conference championships. She also received first-team all-state laurels by the Illinois Coaches Association for Girl's and Women's Sports (ICAGWS) as a senior.

The three-year veteran of United States Volleyball Association play also competed for the Region 7 team at last year's Prairie State Games. Thomas has been nominated three times for best setter awards during summer camps.

The determined athlete also excels in the classroom. She is ranked third in her class and plans on majoring in science education at Eastern.

Thomas is the fourth Illinois prep standout to sign to play at Eastern next season. The other three are: 6-3 Melisa Beckmann (Breese/Central), 5-11 Gina Knoke (Waterloo/Gibault) and 5-7 Diane Lessner (Chicago Ridge/Mt. Assisi Academy).